

Applicant : Brandyn Webb, et al.
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REMARKS

Claims 1-38 were pending as of the action mailed May 6, 2005, with claims 1, 16, 31, 35, and 36 being independent

Claims 1-3, 8-10, 12, 13, 16-18, 23-25, 27, 28, 31-38 have been amended. No new matter has been added. For example, claims 1, 16, 31, and 33 have been amended to recite "determining whether an interactive relationship exists between a user entering the first forum and one or more other users entering the first forum or one or more other users already in the first forum" and "if an interactive relationship exists, placing the user entering the forum in a clone of the forum based on the relationship." Claims 35 and 36 recite variants of the quoted text. An *interactive* relationship between two or more users can exist, for example, because the users have "engage in a conversation, or otherwise interact with each other in a forum and become associated with each other," as described at page 6, lines 5-17 of the application, or because the users have recently been in the same forum, as described at page 6, line 18 - page 7, line 6 of the application, or because the user expresses a desire to be associated with another user or group of users, as described at page 8, lines 7-20 of the application, or because the user expresses a desire not to be associated with another user or group of users, as described at page 9, lines 15-23 of the application.

Reconsideration of the action is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections under Section 112

Claim 38 has been rejected as reciting a limitation that lacks antecedent basis. Claim 38 has been amended to address the examiner's concern.

Rejections under Section 103

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Claims 1, 9-12, 14, 16, 24-27, 29, 31, and 33 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,425,012 ("Trovato") in view of U.S. Patent 6,651,086 ("Manber").¹ Of these claims, claims 1, 16, 31, and 33 are independent.

Claims 1, 16, 31 and 33 have been amended to recite "determining whether an interactive relationship exists between a user entering the first forum and one or more other users entering the first forum or one or more other users already in the first forum" and "if an interactive relationship exists, placing the user entering the first forum in a clone of the first forum based on the relationship." Because of this, the user is placed in an appropriate clone of the first forum based on the user's interactive relationship with one or more other users.

Trovato does not determine if an interactive relationship exists between a user and another user, and a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationships with another user. Rather, Trovato places users in a common network based merely on the time the users access the network or on common characteristics between the users (e.g., party affiliation, geographic location, interests). Thus, unlike with Trovato, with the claimed invention various instances of different forums can be populated in a manner that will maintain interactive relationships between users.

Manber does not cure the deficiencies of Trovato. Like Trovato, Manber does not determine if an interactive relationship exists between a user and another user, and a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationships with another user. Rather, in Manber users chose to enter a particular one of several related chat rooms based on the topic being discussed in the particular chat room.

Thus, because neither Trovato nor Manber, alone or in combination, discloses the subject matter of claims 1, 16, 31, and 33, these claims and their dependent claims are not anticipated by or obvious over, and therefore are allowable over, Trovato and Manber.

Claims 2-8, 17-23, 32, 34, and 37-38 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato in view of Manber, and in further view of U.S. Patent 6,336,133 ("Morris").²

¹ Although the heading at page 4 fails to mention that claims 31 and 33 are rejected over Trovato in view of Manber, the Office action rejects these claims over these references at pages 7-12.

² Although the heading at pages 13-14 fails to mention that claims 32 and 34 are rejected over Trovato in view of Manber and in further view of Morris, the Office action rejects these claims over these references at page 14.

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Claims 2-8 and claims 37-38 depend from claim 1. Claims 17-23 depend from claim 16. Claim 32 depends from claim 31. Claim 34 depends from claim 33 and claims. In Morris, a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Because Morris does not cure the deficiencies of Trovato and Manber, dependent claims 2-8, 17-23, 32, 34, and 37-38 are allowable for at least the reasons that apply to the independent claims from which they depend.

Claims 15 and 30 are rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato and Manber, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,888,731 ("Liles").

Claims 15 and 30 depend from independent claims 1 and 16, respectively. In Liles, a user is not placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Because Liles does not cure the deficiencies of Trovato and Manber, claims 15 and 30 are allowable for at least the same reasons that apply to claims 1 and 16.

Claims 35 and 36 are rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato in view of Liles and Morris.

As explained above, neither Liles nor Morris cures the deficiencies of Trovato. In particular, in neither Liles nor Morris is a user placed in a chat network based on an interactive relationship with another user. Thus, claims 35 and 36 are allowable for at least the same reasons that apply to claims 1 and 16.

No fees are believed to be due at this time. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 07844-478001.

Respectfully submitted,



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